

Orig: Mine File -  
cc: R. May  
W. Hedberg  
H. Shepherd.

November 4, 1988

TO: Lowell Braxton, Administrator *Agree L.P. Braxton 11-10*  
FROM: Holland Shepherd and Wayne Hedberg *HWS, DWH*  
RE: Reclamation at the Desert Mound Mine Site, U.S. Diversified Group, M/021/003, Iron County, Utah

Based on a recent site visit and later indepth evaluation of the situation, we recommend that the remaining, poorly revegetated acreage at the Desert Mound site be left in it's present state. We also recommend that the entire site now be released from any further revegetation responsibility. A site visit was made on September 14, 1988 by ourselves and representatives of the U.S. Diversified Group. The specifics of this visit are described in a memo to file dated September 19, 1988.

The small 3 acre area under consideration is located in the extreme northwest section of the mine site. The area parallels the railroad tracks for approximately 1/2 mile and extends 50-100 feet on the east side of the tracks. The railroad right-of-way is 50 feet on either side of the tracks. The area consists of black iron ore fines and gravel, upon which it would be very difficult to motivate a healthy plant community. The rational for waiving the regulatory requirement to perform additional revegetation efforts on the remaining three acres follows:

First, there is no guarantee that a third attempt at revegetating this area would be successful. It would require approximately \$2400.00 to do the job and this money would likely be wasted. The operator offered to contribute this dollar amount to a Division general reclamation account, but because the Division does not presently maintain such an account the offer was turned down. One likely assurance of successful revegetation would be to bring in topsoil. However, because the area is a pre-law disturbance, this is an unreasonable requirement to impose upon the operator.

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Secondly, the poorly revegetated area is environmentally insignificant. It is not considered an environmentally sensitive area. The area is nearly flat, and will not present a potential erosion problem. The area is not prime wildlife habitat. The contiguous plant community is that of sage-grass. It is an arid area and has relatively sparse plant cover. Runoff from the area does not contribute to any intermittent or perennial streams or free-standing bodies of water.

Thirdly, a significant portion of this area falls within the railroad right-of-way, which effectively exempts the mine operator from that area of reclamation responsibility. The railroad right-of-way is 50 feet on either side of the tracks.

Fourthly, the three acres under discussion are small in proportion to the entire 91 acre site. The remaining mine site acreage has been satisfactorily reclaimed.

Our recommendation is that the Division release the operator from any further reclamation obligations at this site. The current reclamation surety bond equals \$146,381 and is backed by the Federal Insurance Company. We are available to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding this permitting action.

jb  
MN14/10-11